

November 2018

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# THE TIDINGS

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The Shelter Island Presbyterian Church Newsletter

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SHELTER ISLAND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

**A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR BOB**  
***THE GIFT OF HOSPICE***



A word spoken is a most powerful thing. It has the generative power to create a space for possibility, promise and hope. Created in God's image, we have been gifted with this creative power. Not in the way that God speaks and creates out of nothing, but in a way to affirm and to point to that which is true and pure and real. To point to the one who does have the power to create and to redeem and to save.

Several months ago I visited a man who had just come under Hospice care and who was in the last stages of kidney disease. He was in the last bed against the wall of a lifeless and dreary room in a nursing home. He and his two roommates stared wordlessly at a blaring television positioned high upon the wall in front of them. Its glow anesthetizing them to life by the flood of game shows and daytime soap operas broken only by advertisements offering false images of what it means to be a person of real worth and meaning.

We spoke for a while, learning a bit about each other, sizing each other up and searching for connection. He shared that he was a lapsed Lutheran and a social worker and that he had retired many years ago. He was getting tired so I asked him whether he would be open to me praying with and for him. He shared that his real problem was constant pain and asked whether I would pray that it would diminish. I began to pray specifically for his request and just as I was about to finish, he began to sob uncontrollably. I opened my eyes and he said to me:

*'What you just said...what you just said.'*

I asked him specifically what words he meant, for I did not know what had touched him so deeply.

*'How you ended the prayer,'* he said, *'How you ended the prayer'*

I had ended the prayer by reminding us both of the promise that what the Father had done for the Son by raising him from the dead, he would surely do for each and every one of us who believed into him.

It was these words, proclaimed more than merely spoken, that had penetrated the din of that television, had passed through the presenting problem of the constant physical pain and had entered the real battle being waged in the soul of that man. Whatever doubts

about his connection and relationship to a God that he knew had created him and sustained him and had promised that death had not the power to speak the last word, was for the moment put to rest.

The inclination to say some important thing that will change people's lives has much flesh in it. I, like most, are prone to this temptation. It was not my words or insight that touched that man. It was simply my being fully present to deeply connect and to enjoy the source of that connection. The gospel promise, spoken in a prayer, had been whispered to that man by the Holy Spirit, long before I came on the scene. A word spoken had reminded us both that God himself had paid the price to create the space in which an alternative resurrection perspective held sway. We only needed to allow our worldly perspective to die in order to move into the center of his. In this journey from one perspective to the other is the real adventure and the true challenge for any person or for any congregation.

Blessings,  
*Pastor Bob*



## NEWS FROM OUR DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

Our Sunday adult choir is going great this year after resuming rehearsals and weekly worship anthems since Labor Day. We were particularly blessed by the addition of Katie Herbst, alto, from the Sylvester Manor crew. (She brought our average age down by at least 20 years!) We will miss her as she leaves now to explore other parts of the world. We are always open to new members joining us if you love to sing. Talk to me or any choir member.



Mark your calendars for **Sun. Dec. 16, 3 p.m.** for the annual Community Christmas Concert here at SIPC. Rehearsals started on Oct. 30. It's not too late to join!

*Linda Betjeman, Minister of Music*

## ON STEWARDSHIP

In case you missed our three stewardship speakers, it was suggested that we put them in our November *Tidings*.

**John Miller:** Before I begin I would appreciate a show of hands of all the people in the congregation who really enjoy asking folks to donate money. Nobody? Ah. Just as I suspected. Me too!

So, When Laura asked me to lead off the stewardship drive for financial pledges for next year, the first thing I did was look up the real meaning of stewardship, which is the euphemism we use to ask you for money. And it helped me stand up here when I read that the real meaning of stewardship simply means “taking care of something.”

I looked around this wonderful space and thought, “boy, this is really something to take of.” Look at the wonderful choir, and our amazing organist and choir director. Check out our new minister and the pulpit and think about the reassurance you have received from so many of our ministers over the years. And the building itself. It’s no accident that this structure is right in the center of town, because for more than 275 years it has been central to the life of our Island. And look around your pew at the friends who have become family, and the families that have grown up here with all of the blessings of this place.

Then take a look at yourself. Why are you here? Ok, maybe coffee hour has a lot to do with it! But we all know that something happens when we walk into this room. An inner warmth takes over and we all feel that we are in a special place, filled with anticipation.

Just by being here you are already stewards of this church, and many, if not, most of you, are as generous as you feel you can be in “taking care of” this place. But because

I've always believed that the happiest people in the world are the most giving people, I am happy to ask you to consider your gift to the church for the coming year.

And I have a small request. As it happens, I'm married to someone who loves to make lists. I do not! But my request is that when you go home today, make a list. Make it before you decide how you will help this congregation to "take care of" this church. Think about what this church has meant to you over the years. To your kids. To your parents. To friends in their struggles. To pals with their health issues. To the town with its desperate need for guidance and a moral center for its young people. Write them all down on your list. I know there are a hundred other blessings that you might include. Before you go to bed tonight, read the list and maybe tomorrow night, too.

When that dreaded envelope arrives in the mail asking for a 2019 pledge, maybe that little list might guide how you can think about "taking care" of this blessed place. Thank you all for your friendship and affection.

**Marilynn Pyshe:** I've been tapped to talk with you about how I feel about this church and — I hope — inspire your stewardship. Primarily, Ken and I attend this church because we love and value being connected to this church family.

This was especially brought home to us when we each had surgery at various times and received much care and support through your visits, calls, cards and prayers. We love the fellowship, the insight from the pulpit, the uplifting, incredible music and the spiritual nourishment we so need and receive.

While it feels rather unseemly to talk about money in church, the reality is the church needs our pledges to plan the budget, pay the few folks employed here, do upkeep on this beautiful old building and to help support the ever-increasing mission work of the church, such as preparing meals for the homeless on the North Fork, offering

workshops for seniors, visiting shut-ins who are isolated and depressed and giving mini-loans through KIVA to help people in other countries start their own business and support their families.

And so Ken and I pledge annually. Be assured that the elders take their fiduciary responsibilities very seriously and do everything possible to stretch every penny. In addition, many folks do lots of things to add to the coffers through various fundraising efforts, while many give considerable time, energy, expertise, home-made goodies and other things without asking for reimbursement.

There are many ways to be stewards, to ensure our church survives and thrives. So it is my hope that you will participate in the health, growth and work of this church by pledging what you can, both financially and physically. In closing I'd like to point out a person who really inspires me by both pledging and doing mission work: our youngest steward: Michael Kotula. May we all follow his example.

**Vicki Kotula:** A few weeks ago when Laura Nelsen asked me to speak about stewardship I thought: sheesh, she must be awfully hard up! I am not a member, a relative newbie and not as involved as I have been in past churches. As a child, I sang in the children's choir, as was the family tradition, as a teen, I was an acolyte and taught Sunday School and was a liaison to council for the youth group. I have served on church councils, steering committees, been a lay assistant, and I can't seem to shake being in a choir. I have been involved with the bell choir here off and on over the years as well.

I always considered this part of my responsibility and stewardship to the church and in addition to any financial pledge made. Ed and I are grateful we have found a church family that encourages Abby and Michael to experience and practice Christian charity,



nurture their faith and worship in a loving place. We pledge to keep SIP Church going for the next year, decade and century so it can continue to do the work it does for this community and the world. We pledge because God and SIP Church have given us so much and this is one small way to say thank you. We are grateful others in the past have pledged and followed through with their pledges so SIP Church is here today.

### **FROM THE DEACONS**

Deacons assisted at the memorial service for Betsy Gibbs, providing desserts and beverages. We also provided set-up and clean-up help. Betsy served our church as elder and deacon at various times. She will certainly be missed.

Cards and visits to shut-ins, and flowers from Sunday service are given to those who are ill or just need a bit of cheering up in the community.



We are preparing for the Christmas holiday gifts of money for gas, fuel, food and medical assistance. The deacons rely on the generosity of the church members for monetary help. Thank you.

Brenda Bergman, Deacon

## ABOUT MAUREEN'S HAVEN



This month our mission team will prepare lunches for the East End homeless on Friday, Nov. 2 and Wednesday, Nov. 14. We'll meet at 3 p.m. in the kitchen of Fellowship Hall. A group of volunteers will begin to make 30 sandwiches, while others will gather supplies of bottled water, snacks and fruit. Another group will pack the items into brown bags for a delicious substantial lunch ready for transport to Southold Presbyterian or St. Peter's Lutheran Church. There's a lot of chatter and laughter as we work and, believe it or not, we finish by 3:30!

## SOUPY SUNDAYS

Don't we all love soup at this time of year? Isn't it fun trying the different soups that our congregants are bringing in for our soup fundraiser each Sunday? Wouldn't you like to sign up to make soup one Sunday during our Soupy Sunday season? The sign-up sheet is on the table right inside Fellowship Hall. Thank you all for participating.

## KIVA TEAM NEWS



*Our Goal is*

*\$5,000 for the year*

Cards and visits to shut-ins, and flowers from Sunday service are given to those who are ill or just need a bit of cheering up in the community.

We now have 31 members who have made a total of 511 loans in our three years of activity. Eighty-one percent of the loans have been made to females and 19 percent to male borrowers totaling \$14,700. In 2016 our team loaned \$4,425; in 2017 we loaned \$4,650 and so far this year we are at \$4,500 and on track to exceed last year's giving. Good work Team!

Our loans are being made to the following sectors of the economy: Agriculture, 119 loans; Food, 101 loans; Retail, 84 loans; Clothing, 34 loans; and Services, 26 loans. The top countries that we have loaned to are: Palestine, 7.05 percent (36 loans); Kenya, 5.87 percent (30 loans); Cambodia, 5.87 percent (30 loans); and Vietnam, 5.68 percent (29 loans).

All of these statistics do not begin to tell the lives our group has had an impact on and, we hope, improved. Our loans are not without risk. In the past we have had people default on loans because of war and forced migration and recently one defaulted due to sea level rise and flooding. The people in developing countries struggle with unimaginable challenges. Your efforts make a difference and let's try to reach the \$5,000 mark by the end of the year. If you have any problems and concerns contact: John Kerr at 631-740-0414.

## **NEWS FROM THE ALL-FAITH YOUTH GROUP**

The youth group had its first meeting of the 2018-2019 season on Oct. 3. The Board met with counselors Bryan and Kate before the meeting. Bryan shared the plans for the year, which include a kick-off pizza and dodgeball night for 9th through 12th graders. Once a month, 7th and 8th graders will be included. On Oct. 14 we held a one-day retreat at Camp Quinipet for 9th through 12th graders. The Youth Group will participate in the Island-wide Ecumenical Thanksgiving Eve Service, Wednesday, Nov. 21. This

year the service will be at Shelter Island Presbyterian Church. The Spring retreat is tentatively planned for May 4 at the new North Fork United Methodist Church Building in Southold. Bryan and Kate are thankful for all three of the island churches monetary support and other various ways we help out.



Just a reminder that every purchase you make through AmazonSmile generates income for the church. A total of \$264 has been generated so far. You can see your personal portion by looking under the white search bar where it says Supporting: Shelter Island Presbyterian Church. Click on those words and the information will appear.

DATES TO REMEMBER



Celebrity Chef: Tommy Ritzler, Nov, 14, 6 p.m.

Thanksgiving Eve Ecumenical Service: Wednesday, Nov. 21. This year SIPC will be hosting the Ecumenical Service. Members of the All Faith Youth Group will be participating in the service.

# Giving Thanks



Save the date: Dec. 28: We will celebrate the last activity of our 275th anniversary.

## Reminder: Worship Hours

Our service begins at 10:30 a.m.

### **Contact Info:**

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